



# Interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet*

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Language Arts  
Grades 9-12



## Introduction

Romeo, Romeo! Where for art thou...interpretation? In this lesson, students will learn how different interpretations of *Romeo and Juliet* compare to the original text.

## Learning Objectives

([CCSS. ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.7](#)) Students will analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)

## Materials Needed

- Journals/notebooks
- Movie version of *Romeo and Juliet* (teacher will select at his/her discretion)
- Recorded onstage production of *Romeo and Juliet* (teacher will select at his/her discretion)

## Procedure

Prior to beginning this lesson, students should have completed a close read and study of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. This study normally is quite involved over the span of several days.

1. Ask students to think about this question: *Have you ever read a book and watched the movie interpretation of the book? If so, how did the two compare? Were they identical? Somewhat similar? Or were there multiple discrepancies?* Inform students that they will be comparing different versions or interpretations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.
2. Students should be very familiar with *Romeo and Juliet* having just completed a close read of the text. On the board, make two columns. One side should say "movie" and the other should say "live production." Students should also make the columns in their notebooks or journals. Inform students that they will be evaluating how *Romeo and Juliet* has been interpreted differently through various uses of the text via onstage plays and movies. They will note the major differences in the story and the key elements that did not change.

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3. This portion of the lesson will not be completed during one class period. (The next two steps of the lesson will take place over the course of several class periods.) Students should view a movie production of *Romeo and Juliet* first. Students should use their journals or notebooks to keep up with their findings in their columns (multiple pages may be used to record findings). Students should specifically look for the following: *What is similar or different from the original text?*
4. Then, students should view a recorded live production of the play. As with the movie, students must take note of any discrepancies and/or similarities to the text.
5. Now that students have viewed two versions of the same play, students will report how each version interprets the source text. Students will write an informative text about how they compare to the original text version. Students must provide evidence for all of their claims from the two interpretations and the source text. Students may complete their writing in class or as homework. Student writing should be at least five paragraphs in length with an abundance of supporting evidence from both interpretations of the play. Use the rubric below to evaluate student work.

## Evaluation

<b><i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Interpretation Study</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>25%</b>
1. The student includes evidence from the movie interpretation.				
2. The student includes evidence from the live production.				
3. The student relates evidence to the source text.				
4. Evidence presented is logical and supports claims.				